

Social Realities in Urban England's Society Reflected on *About A Boy* by Nick Hornby



A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of cultural science Hasanuddin University in partial fulfillment of requirements to obtain a Sarjana Degree in English Department

By

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**SOCIAL REALITIES IN URBAN ENGLAND'S SOCIETY REFLECTED ON
ABOUT A BOY BY NICK HORNBY**

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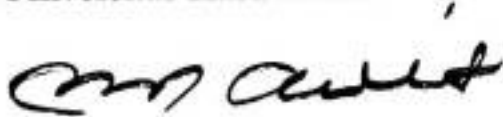
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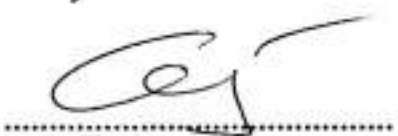

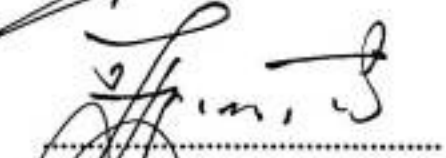
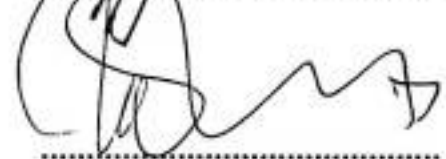
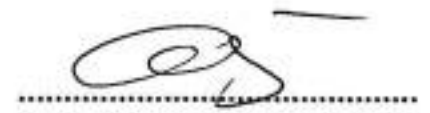
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ABOUT A BOY BY NICK HORNBY**

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- Synopsis of *About A Boy*
- Biography of Nick Hornby

ABSTRAK

Karya tulis ini berjudul *Social Realities in Urban England's Society Reflected on About A Boy by Nick Hornby*. Skripsi ini membahas tentang kehidupan sosial masyarakat perkotaan Inggris khususnya masyarakat London pada periode 1990-an. Analisis dilakukan dengan mengkaji struktur novel, yang meliputi analisis karakter dan latar dalam novel.

Adapun pendekatan yang digunakan oleh penulis adalah pendekatan strukturalisme genetik, yaitu pendekatan yang menghubungkan struktur dalam karya dengan aspek intrinsik yang mempengaruhi terciptanya karya tersebut, diantaranya adalah realita sosial masyarakat perkotaan Inggris pada era akhir abad 20 dalam karya dan autobiografi pengarangnya.

Hasil analisis membuktikan bahwa permasalahan-permasalahan sosial seperti tingginya perceraian yang menimbulkan banyaknya orangtua tunggal yang sebagian besar adalah wanita, maraknya penggunaan obat-obatan seperti mariyuana dan ekstasi, timbulnya depresi dan kecenderungan untuk bunuh diri dan kuatnya pengaruh budaya populer seperti televisi, musik dan olahraga dalam membentuk masyarakat dan individu yang tercermin dalam novel melalui karakter dan latarnya merupakan realita sosial dari masyarakat perkotaan Inggris pada era 1990-an.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background

As one of human works, literature mostly describes about human life itself. It reflects the picture of life which may occur in our social realities. Moreover, it is influenced by the author's subjectivity such as the place where the author lives, the condition of society, and the time when the work is written. Thus, it makes literary work full of information about the society in certain scopes. In brief, literature can be considered as a reflection of society, culture, and civilization.

From the explanation above, the writer considers that literary work can be said as a social institution which uses language as a medium. It is like what Damono (1978:25) said that "literature performs the picture of life, and the life itself is a social realities". Therefore, it needs an observation toward the society, object and the way to express objectively without changing the truth. The author has to depict the truth as it is.

In line with this, Nick Hornby as one of the well-known English novelists and essayists these days who is an outstanding author who serves social facts in most of his works. He is best known for the novels *High Fidelity* (1995), *Fever Pitch* (1997) and *About A Boy* (1998). His works frequently touch the social realities of urban England society.

His novel *About A Boy* (1998), as one of his best selling novels which has been mentioned above was written in 1998 and was adapted into movies in 2002 starring Hugh Grant is set in London, England at the late of 1993 to the early 1994. It depicts the realities of middle class-urban London's life in the 1990's. Interestingly, even though it is entitled *About A Boy*, the story itself actually tells about two "boys", the growing relationship between Marcus, an outcast twelve year old boy from a single parent family and Will Freeman, a middle thirties man who overcomes his own immaturity through his growing relationship with Marcus.

In this case, the descriptions of the characters' mind, behavior and setting on the novel which are most of the families in the story are single-families, the drugs using, inclination of being depressed in which leads to suicidal

tendency, and the people's obsession to popular culture such as music, movies, televisions, and sports, the writer believes that it is actually a life photograph of Londoners' at the late twentieth century.

Moreover, London is the largest urban area and capital of England and United Kingdom. It is included as one of the biggest cities in the world with a population of just under seven million. On the other hand, shifts in the nature of population and in the pattern of living have contributed in changing the London's urban character. The city's central position in the Commonwealth of Nations has made it much more cosmopolitan. Also, cultural influences which work through such media as radio and television have set common behavioral patterns, as well as the growth of mass industries. However, as it is stated on *Sociology and Social Life* by Raymond W. Mack and Kimball Young, the worldwide urban expansion also brings great changes in its major patterns of social organization and culture. It cannot be neglected the fact that the city also induces variability, inventiveness, and cultural change. Urban life may and does foster creativeness in basic as well as secondary situations, in personal life organization, and in social movements. On the whole, the

larger the community, the more likely finds a sense of personal isolation, loss of intimacy with others, and similar marks of society. Therefore, life becomes more complex, particularly, in London in the late twentieth century. This can represent what Marcus, one of the characters, is felt.

"It wouldn't have happened in Cambridge, he didn't think, but what he couldn't work out was whether Cambridge was different because it wasn't London, or because it was where his parents had lived together, and where, therefore, life was simpler-no snogging with strange people in front of your kid, and no yelling rude at your mum. There were no rules here, and he was old enough to know that when you went to a place, or a time, with no rules then things were bound to more complicated" (Hornby, 2000:20).

Thus, by the explanations above, the writer is interested to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements specifically in order to describe the social realities in urban England society at the early 1990's and choose *About A Boy* as his object of the research. In addition, the other reason for the writer chooses the novel, besides it has never been taken by any students to become the object of research as far as the writer knows, the novel itself is really interesting. It is a quick-to-read book that the writer could

not put it down because it has a unique characterization and very funny dialog with its constants humor and sarcasm.

1.2 The Identification of Problems

On the novel, the writer has found and analyzed some problems, which are:

- 1) Most of the families in the story are single families.
- 2) The marijuana consumption which are done by Will and Marcus's father, Clive have become somekind of a guilty pleasure.
- 3) Fiona, Marcus's mother is described to have the tendency of being depressed which can make one's to commit suicide, while Kurt Cobain, the famous American rock artist in the nineties who took his own life by shooting his head at the early 1994, is also depicted on the novel.
- 4) The obsession of popular culture such as music, movies, televisions and sports in the society especially in the young generation.

1.3 The Scope of Problems

In analyzing Nick Hornby's work, the writer limits it to the mind and behaviour of the characters and setting. Then,

the writer tries to connect it to the social realities of urban England's society in 1990's.

1.4 Statement of Problems

1. How do the society's condition describe through the characters and setting on the novel?
2. How does it reflect the social realities of urban England during 1990's?

1.5 The Objective of Study

1. To describe the society's condition which is depicted on the novel.
2. To explain how it represents the social realities of urban England during 1990's.

1.6 Methods of Writing

In a research, methods are used to conduct the research in sorting out the problem with the support of certain amount of spesific data as the basis to draw the conclusion.

Moreover, the writer uses the method that consists of method of collecting data and method of analyzing data. They can be explained as follows:

1.6.1 Method of Collecting Data

There are two kinds of data which the writer collects, they are:

1. Primary data, the novel itself which has been read by the writer closely and then he writes down everything that matters.
2. Secondary data, the supporting data which are taken by doing library research. The data can be taken from some books, articles and journals. Also, it is gotten by searching on internet.

1.6.2 Method of Analyzing Data

In writing this thesis, the writer uses *Genetic Structuralism* to explain the society's condition on *About A Boy*, by seeing the intrinsic elements which builds the novel itself and also the extrinsic elements of the novel that are related to the topic.

1.7 Sequence of Chapters

Chapter I presents introduction. It consists of background, identification of problems, scope of problems, statement of problems, objective of writing, methodology, and sequence of chapters.

Chapter II presents literature review. Some review of the theory of literature, structuralism and genetic-structuralism theory. There is also the social condition of London in the nineties.

Chapter III presents the analysis. It contains the analysis of social realities of urban England in 1990's that is reflected on *About A Boy*.

Chapter IV presents the conclusion of thesis with some suggestions from the writer to the readers in order to give input to the same study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Genetic Structuralism

Genetic Structuralism is an approach, which appeared in 1960. The pioneer of this approach is Lucien Goldman. It is defined as a structure analysis which focuses on a pedigree of a literary work. "*Secara definitif strukturalisme genetik adalah analisis struktur dengan memberikan perhatian terhadap asal-usul karya*"(Kutha Ratna, 2004:123).

Moreover, it is a theory of literature that refers to the structure and genetic aspects in analyzing the literary work. The structure are plot, characters, theme and setting, while genetic aspects are the history of literary works and some reality factors, which influence the work before it is created. In other words, literary work has its genetic or history in a process of human social life. Goldmann says on Faruk's *Pengantar Sosiologi Sastra: dari Strukturalisme Genetik sampai Post-Modernisme* that:

"...karya sastra merupakan sebuah struktur. Akan tetapi, struktur itu bukanlah sesuatu yang statis, melainkan merupakan sebuah produk dari proses sejarah yang terus berlangsung, proses strukturasi dan destrukturasi yang hidup dan dihayati oleh masyarakat asal karya sastra yang bersangkutan" (2003:12).

Furthermore, according to him that the structure meaning represents the world view of the author's by the expression of the imagery characters, objects and relations. His vision is described on Faruk as written below:

"...pandangan dunia merupakan istilah yang cocok bagi kompleks menyeluruh dari gagasan, aspirasi-aspirasi, dan perasaan-perasaan, yang menghubungkan secara bersama-sama anggota-anggota suatu kelompok sosial tertentu dan yang mempertentangkannya dengan kelompok-kelompok sosial lainnya" (2003:16).

In other words, an author is not considered as an individual but as a representative of his society. Therefore, through the literary work, the reader can identify the trends, which exist in author's society at certain period.

Therefore, *Genetic Structuralism* can be formulated as follows:

1. The research of literary work itself. The structure of literary work is analyzed to prove the unity of its parts so that it will unite as a whole.

2. The literary work that is analyzed only for the work which has literary value in which contains of tension among variety dan unity in a coherent whole.
3. Its correlation with social culture which is related to the mental structure that has relation with author's worldview (Fananie, 2000:119).

In line with this, in analyzing *About A Boy*, it also involves some elements such as history and society's condition when the author creates it.

2.3 Intrinsic Elements

▪ Structure of A Novel

According to *Pickering and Hoeper*, the word *fiction* refers to any narrative, in prose or in verse, that is wholly or in part the product of the imagination. Moreover, fiction has its historical and cultural dimensions that it universally presents in the lives of all human being. Novel is one kind of fictions. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a novel is 'a fictitious prose narrative or tale of considerable length (now usually one long enough to fill one or more volumes) in which characters and actions

representative of the real life of past or present times portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity'.

Moreover, novel depicts imagery characters and situations. A novel may include reference to real places, people and events, but it cannot contain only such references and remain a novel. Even though its characters and actions are imagery, they are in some sense are 'representatives of real life', as the dictionary definition has it. Culler in *Sastra and Ilmu Sastra* by A. Teew states that:

"...the novel serves as the model by which society conceives of itself, the discourses in and through which it articulates the world, and our identity depend on the novel, what the others think of us, what he think of ourselves...how the others see us if not as a character from a novel? The novelist the primary semiotic agent of intelligibility" (1988:228-229).

In brief, a novel is concerned with the 'real life of past or present times'.

▪ **Characterization**

Characterization is important in literary works that the social condition and social attitude can be portrayed through characters because truthfully, a character is a member of society.

Moreover, the author can focus on the external reality of characters by describing their appearances, actions, or manner of speech. The author can also portray the inner reality of characters by revealing their thoughts and feelings.

- **Setting**

Setting is the set of time, place and social condition in which the story occurs. It also contains cultural background and leads atmosphere that is related to the behavior of the society in certain time and place.

Thus, setting covers the places in which characters are presented, the social context of characters; such as their families, friends, and class; the customs, beliefs and rules of behavior of their society.

2.4 Extrinsic Elements

- **London at the late Twentieth Century**

During the 20th century, London's identity had been gone through many phases, from the imperial to the modernist and multicultural city. In the first quarter of the century, London was an imperial capital. *Trafalgar Square*, the *Palace of Westminster* and *Buckingham Palace* are three examples of the famous imperial's iconic places which were considered as

representations of tradition and values. Only one of London traditional public spaces which was began to develop a new character of the late twentieth century, modern and multicultural. This was *Piccadilly Circus*, which became the first electrically advertisements that flashed in 1910.

Moreover, as a city of multiple cultures at the late twentieth century, London's identity developed as a place of youth and alternative values which was tied up with its growing sense. The last quarter of the twentieth century, London became more comfortable with its aspects of characters. London began to present itself to the outside world in a way that reflected the changing ethnic of Londoners.

On the other hand, by the diversity, more various and complex social problems occurred in the society. For examples, divorce and drug addiction. Divorce, which was not common in the early 20th century, were grew high that by 1990's as many one third of marriages ended in divorce. Meanwhile, because of the war on drugs, Police and State increased powers over our civil liberties, from stop and search on suspicion of drugs testing, criminal records for millions of people, interception of fax, phone & email.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

In the analysis of *About A Boy*, the writer attempts to depict the social realities of urban England in the late twentieth century which was fulfilled with problems such as family-breakups and drugs using. Moreover, to begin with, the writer starts from the analysis of intrinsic elements which are characters and setting. These are important parts in gathering informations that the writer needs related to the research. Then, the writer involves and connects them to the facts of social realities of urban England in the 1990's. Additionally, the writer analyzes the biography of the author, Nick Hornby, which can be considered as a genetic factor or author's subjectivity to his works.

3.1 Intrinsic Elements

3.1.1 Characters

To identify and analyze the characters, the writer concentrates only to the characters that the writer considers giving noteworthy descriptions, which are linked to the

analysis. In the analysis, the writer portrays how the characters think and behave, also their relation with the society and family.

Furthermore, there are six characters that the writer analyzes; four are major characters and two are minor characters. The major characters are Will Freeman, Marcus, Fiona and Ellie Mcrae, while the minor characters are Rachel and Clive.

1) Will Freeman

Will Freeman, one of the main characters, is a 36-year-old man who lives in London.

"What about you, anyway, Will?" "I'm fine, thanks." "Any desire for a family of your own yet?" "I would rather eat one of Barney's dirty nappies, he thought. 'Not yet,' he said. You are worry to us," said Christine. I'm OK as I am, thanks'" (Hornby, 2000:8).

Furthermore, from the quotation above, it can be identified that Will is not the family type because he does not want to get married or even children. He wants to live his own life and does not want to think of other people's problems or be responsible for them. What's more, the writer

considers that Will is not really grown-up yet as he does not take life very serious. That is why the writer assumes, as it is stated on the introduction, that even the novel is entitled *About a Boy*, it actually tells about 'two boys', the actual boy is Marcus since he is just twelve years old and the other boy is Will because of his immaturity. In addition, the writer interprets that Will's surname, Freeman, is given by Hornby to indicate his character, a free man.

In line with this, Will's immaturity also reflects on the fact that he does not work and actually never worked a day in his life.

"The truth was he didn't mind. He applied for these jobs in the same spirit that he had volunteered to work in the soup kitchen, and in the same spirit that he had become the father of Ned: it was all a dreamy alternative reality that didn't touch his real life, whatever that was, at all. He didn't need a job. He was OK as he was. He read quite a lot; he saw films in the afternoon; he went jogging; he cooked nice meals for himself and his friends; he went to Rome and New York and Barcelona every now and again, when boredom became particularly acute.....He couldn't say that the need for change burned within him terribly fiercely" (Hornby, 2000:72-73).

Whatsoever, he is very proud of his way of life and of what he is doing like not having to work for his money. He

enjoys having a lot of spare time. Most of this, he spends smoking, watching TV, listening to albums, hanging around with his friends or just strolling about without purpose. Beyond, Will is quite rich by earning more than forty thousand pounds a year from the royalties of a famous Christmas song, *Santa's Super Sleigh* that his father once wrote so that he has no pressure at all for trying to find a job. "He had spent more than three hundred pounds on a jacket (five points). He had spent more than twenty pounds on a haircut (five points)" (Hornby, 2000:5).

According to his expensive clothes and haircut by the quotation above, it is not just shown that he is a rich man, but the writer also interprets that Will cares very much for his appearance. The writer assumes that Will can be considered as a metrosexual man, a typical city men that began to flourish in the nineties. Metrosexual is a neologism generally applied to heterosexual men with a strong concern for their appearance, or whose lifestyles display attributes stereotypically seen among gay men. Metrosexualism is closely related to Dandyism. The term originated on an article by Mark Simpson ("Here come the mirror men" published on

November 15, 1994, in The Independent. Simpson wrote:

"Metrosexual man, the single young man with a high disposable income, living or working in the city (because that's where all the best shops are), is perhaps the most promising consumer market of the decade. In the Eighties he was only to be found inside fashion magazines such as GQ, in television advertisements for Levis jeans or in gay bars. In the Nineties, he's everywhere and he's going shopping."

Furthermore, he thinks that his appearance impresses people especially women and makes him interesting for them. It is important especially when he is looking for female companionship, preferably of the short-lived variety. After a pleasant short relationship with a single mother, Will comes up with the idea of attending a single parents group called SPAT (Single Parents, Alone Together) which are full of available women, all waiting for Mr. Nice Guy. He thinks that it will be a benefit for him that they are already tied to previous relationships and to their children to become too serious in a new relationship with him. He then invents a two-year old son called Ned to get into them.

It is at one of these single parents meetings, he comes to know Marcus and a friendship develops. Will helps Marcus to fit into the modern world. He takes him shopping, buys him

shoes and introduces him to the music of Nirvana. Soon, Marcus and Will make more friendships. Meanwhile, through the influence of Marcus, Will starts to change. As a result, Will who never cares and feels connected emotionally to anyone else before, finds himself as a father figure for Marcus even though he does not know why. Also, Will starts going out with a single mum called Rachel and soon, to be madly in love with her. Marcus is a complex individual who finally opens Will's eyes. Will finds a meaning to his life, other than his previous job, which was nothing.

"Will knew this was supposed to make him feel better about everything, but it didn't. For a start, he'd only known Marcus for a few months, so Rachel had raised some interesting questions about the thirty-six years he had let slip through his fingers. And he didn't want to be defined by Marcus. He wanted his own life, and his own identity; he wanted to be interesting in his own right. Where had he heard that complaint before? At SPAT, that's where. He had somehow managed to turn himself into a single parent without even going to the trouble of fathering a child" (Hornby, 2000:210).

In brief, because of Marcus, Will becomes more mature. He is no longer a selfish man who cares nothing but himself. He learns how to get rid of his shell, to feel and get involved with someone because life actually does come knocking on the door and he cannot keep it out.

2) **Marcus**

Marcus is a twelve-year-old boy. He lives with his mother, Fiona in London. They have moved from Cambridge just a few weeks. Marcus is very shy and he does not have any friends, because he is not cool, weird and out of touch.

"He just wasn't right for schools. Not secondary school, anyway. That was it. And how could you explain that to anyone? It was OK not to be right for some things (he already knew he wasn't right for parties, because he was too shy, or for baggy trousers, because his legs were too short), but not being for school was a big problem" (Hornby, 2000:11).

His mother tells him what he has to wear and which kind of music he should listen to, like Joni Mitchell and Bob Marley. She thinks that she knows what is good for her son and she does not allow him to make his own decisions.

"She'd done him again. She always told him he could do what he wanted, and then argued with him until what he wanted was what she wanted anyway. It was beginning to make him angry" (Hornby, 2000:120).

Then, he meets Will Freeman, a 36-year-old man, who does not have a job, a family or a regular life. Fiona does not like him because she is afraid of losing Marcus. Therefore, she forbids him not to come to Will's flat. Nevertheless, Marcus visits Will no matter what. Marcus likes Will, because

he shows him another way of life and Will helps him to be cool in school. He tells him about popular music and he buys him new shoes (Adidas trainers). It is described by this dialog below.

"You're not going there again," she said on the way home. Marcus knew she'd say it, and he also knew that he'd take no notice, but he argued anyway. "Why not?" "If you've got anything to say, you say it to me. If you want new clothes, I'll get them." "But you don't know what I need." "So tell me." "I don't know what I need. Only Will knows what I need." "Don't be ridiculous." "It's true. He knows what things kids wear." (Hornby, 2000:117)

While Will himself, is not happy to see him every day, but after some time he gets used to it.

So, for Marcus, Will is very important in his life, because he is the first person Marcus can talk with instead of his mother and he can ask him when he has a problem with school or with other pupils like Ellie, an older girl whom Marcus meets at school. She is famous for being in trouble and everybody is afraid of her. It is a strange relationship, because they are very different. From Will and Ellie, Marcus learns how to be cool and autonomous. He is no longer an odd tender boy who is expelled by his schoolmates.

"The truth was that this version of Marcus really wasn't so hard to cope with. He had friends, he could look after for himself, he had developed a skin-the kind of skin Will had just shed. He had flattened out, and become as robust and as unremarkable as every other twelve-year-old kid"(Hornby, 2000:277-278).

In conclusion, on the contrary to Will, by the end of the story, Marcus has developed a 'skin'. He gets friends, hears music, and wears clothes like the other children. He evolves and becomes a "normal" kid for his age.

3) Fiona

Fiona is Marcus's mother and 38 years old. She is a single mother and has to care for her son on her own. She works as a music therapist. *".....she was a music therapist, which meant that she was a sort of teacher of handicapped children....."*(Hornby, 2000:26).

Moreover, she is different from other people because she lives as people did 20 years ago. She is a hippie and does not want to accept the fashion or the music of the 90's. So, she educates Marcus to like only her things and does not allowe him to listen to Nirvana or eat any meat. No wonder, Marcus becomes a weird kid. He is not raised properly according to his age.

".....She just didn't get this, any of it. She was always telling him that only shallow people made judgments on the basis of clothes or hair; she didn't want him to watch rubbish television, or listen to rubbish music, or play rubbish computer games (she thought they were all rubbish), which meant that if he wanted anything that any of the other kids spent their time doing he had to argue with her for hours"(Hornby, 2000:13)

Furthermore, after Fiona and her son have moved to London, she becomes terribly depressed. She feels lonely because she has only one friend there, Susie, her friend in SPAT group (Single Parent Alone Together). In addition, she has lost her interest to any special thing. It is implied on this quotation of her suicide letter below:

".....Listen. A big part of me knows that I'm doing a wrong, stupid, selfish, unkind thing. Most of me, in fact. The trouble is that it's not the part that controls me anymore. That's what's so horrible about the sort of illness I've had for the last few months-it just doesn't listen to anything or anybody else. It just wants to do its won thing. I hope you never get to find out what to do its own thing. I hope you never get to find out what that's like.

None of this anything to do with you. I've loved being your mum, always, even though it's been hard for me and I've found it difficult sometimes. And I don't know why being your mum isn't enough for me, but it isn't. And it isn't that I'm so unhappy I don't want to live any more. That's not what it feels like. It feels more like I'm tired and bored and the party's gone on too long and I want to go home, I feels flat and there doesn't seem to be anything to look forward to, so I'd rather call it a

day. How can I feel like that when I've got you? I don't know" (Hornby, 2000:64-65).

Also, from the quotation above, the writer interprets that she has not really wanted a kid. However, she knows that she has no other choice than caring for him. So, she has to get along with many other things although she does not want to. She thinks her life has turned in a way, which she has never wants to go. Because she feels unlucky about herself and makes her tries to commit suicide, in which, luckily, it does not work because Marcus, Susie and Will arrive not long after she swallowed the pills and immediately bring her to hospital.

Then, everything starts to change. Because of his friendship with Will and Ellie, Marcus is no longer a weak kid who always depends on her. He can take care of him self and no longer so hard to cope with. That is one of the reasons why she can get better since the suicide day by feeling less worn by everything.

In brief, Fiona is a mentally weak person and has not been a good mother for Marcus by her selfishness for not

hearing his opinions and just allowing him to do what she likes to do.

4) Eleanora McCrae (Ellie)

Ellie McCrae is a 15-year-old girl. She hacks off her own hair, wears black lipstick and she is famous for being in trouble. She is a big fan of Kurt Cobain and because of that, she often wears T-Shirts showing his face.

".....but, then Ellie McCrae, this sulky, scruffy girl from year ten who hacked off her own hair and wore black lipstick, sat down on the far end of the row of chairs outside the office. Ellie was famous. She was always in trouble with something or other, usually something quite bad" (Hornby, 2000:135).

One day, while she is sitting in front of Mrs. Morrison's office, she gets to know Marcus. Ellie tells him that Kurt Cobain is a football player and he believes her, though he gets to know the truth later on. Later Marcus and Ellie become good friends, but their relationship is a little bit like "pet and owner", because Marcus falls in love with her while she treats him like a loyal subject. For example, Ellie defends him against other kids who bully him. *"...But I didn't know when I met Ellie the first time that I wanted her*

to be my girlfriend. It took a while to develop.'" (Hornby, 2000:190).

".....All I'm saying is, it might not turn out to be the sort of relationship you want it to be. In my experience romances don't develop in this way. This looks more like pet and owner rather than boyfriend and girlfriend" (Hornby, 2000:205).

In addition, she has a problem with her anger management. She can explode by anytime and do radical things. That is what happens on the day of Kurt Cobain's suicide, she throws one of her boots into a shop window because she thinks that the shop owner is using Cobain's death moment for her own benefit by putting a photo of Kurt Cobain in it. That is why she and Marcus have to go to a police station in Cambridge.

".....Suddenly Marcus could see a problem with his guided missile plan: the problem was that Ellie wasn't actually a guided missile. You couldn't guide her. That didn't matter so much in school, because school was full of walls and rules and she could just bounce off them; but out in the world, where there were no walls and rules, she was scary. She could just blow up in his face any time" (Hornby, 2000:238).

In a conclusion, Ellie is a bad-tempered girl whom sometimes does not think what the cost of her acts is for other people.

5) Rachel

Rachel is a nice, young and attractive woman who meets Will at a party on a New Year's Eve of 1994. She is an illustrator of children's books.

".....She was called Rachel, she illustrated children's books, and she looked a little bit like Laura Nyro, on the cover of Gonna Take A Miracle - nervy, glamorous, Bohemian, clever, lots of long, unruly dark hair" (Hornby. 2000:171).

Moreover, after first being a little cool that evening and showing him her shoulder, she warms up as they meet each other for having dinner together. At the first, Rachel thinks that Will is a man of shallow mind. But then, when Will talks about Marcus, her opinion changes.

"Because I thought you were a sort of blank-you didn't do anything, you weren't passionate about anything, you didn't seem to have much to say - and then when you said you had a kid-" (Hornby, 2000:210).

Additionally, the writer interprets that she feels more interested and related to Will because she thinks that they both are single parents who have been through such difficult times raising their children on their own.

".....Because you didn't lie. I just made it up. I thought, Cute guy, if only he had a kid, a geeky son, pre-teenage if possible, and then you turned up at my house with Marcus, and bingo! I made this crazy link because of some deep psychological need in me" (Hornby, 2000:208).

However, Rachel is afraid of relationship. She has made many bad experiences with single men because of her son's problems with her having a boyfriend and the trouble she has been forced to go through with her ex-husband, so she is afraid of getting to know him better. But eventually, she knows that maybe Will is the right one for her.

By the explanations above, it can be concluded that Rachel is just an ordinary single mother, which is mostly faced by her kid's rejection for stranger man that comes into her life that each new person who comes along seems to represent some kind of a threat.

"Because you get into a pattern, and then each new person who comes along seems to represent some kind of a threat." "Exactly. And the last guy I—" Rachel broke off" (Hornby, 2000:201).

6) Clive

He is Marcus's real father. He lives in Cambridge. He lives separately with Marcus, because Fiona who has the custody moving to London. However, Marcus occasionally goes to Cambridge to meet him or the other way, every Christmas Clive comes to London to see him.

Furthermore, his relationship with Fiona, his ex-wife, is unlike most of people who have been divorced that mostly do not even talked to each other anymore. Clive and Fiona are harmonious, friendly and respect to one another. It is clearly shown when Clive comes to the Christmas party, which is thrown at Marcus's home. Clive even brings along his new girlfriend, Lindsey and her girlfriend's mother. Still, Fiona accepts "the additional guests" without any hesitation at all.

".....There was Marcus's dad Clive, and his girlfriend Lindsey, and his girlfriend's mum, six of them altogether, all squashed round the fold-out dining table

in the flat. Will didn't know that the world was like this. As the product of a 1960's second marriage, he was labouring under misapprehension that when families broke up some of the constituent parts stopped speaking to each other, but the set-up here was different": Fiona and her ex seemed to look back on their relationship as the thing that had brought them together in the first place, rather than something that had gone horribly wrong and driven them apart. It was as if sharing a home and a bed and having child together was like staying in adjacent rooms in the same hotel, or being in the same class at school-a happy coincidence that had given them the opportunity for an occasional friendship(Hornby, 2000:159).

Nonetheless, when it comes to his drug habit, Clive and Fiona always have a fight.

.....Clive rolled a joint, and there was a bit of a row. Lindsey was angry with Clive because of her mum, who had no idea what he was doing until people shouting about it, and Fiona was angry with Clive because of Marcus, who had seen him roll a joint about one thousand million times before" (Hornby, 2000:164).

Based on the quotation above, it can be considered that Clive is quite a drug user. He just does it whenever and wherever he wants it; he does not care even if his family surrounds him. What's more, not only being a drug user, he is just the same with Fiona for not being a good parent for Marcus.

".....I suppose you are a useless father, and that doesn't help a kid very much, but you'd have been a useless

father wherever you were living, so I don't see what difference it makes" (Hornby, 2000:255).

In short, Clive is a selfish, irresponsible person for his family and a bad father for Marcus that he does not give enough attention and affection to him.

3.1.2 Setting

According to Pickering and Hoeper, setting is a term that its broadest sense encompasses both the physical locale that frames the action and the time of day or year, the climatic conditions, and the historical period during which the action takes place. In brief, the setting refers to the condition of the place of the story, where the action occurs.

Therefore, analyzing the setting is important because it gives some clues, which are related to the condition of urban England, particularly in London in the late twentieth century.

Setting of Place and Time

About A Boy is set in London, the largest urban area in England in the early nineties, 1993 to 1994. London is a city in southeast England, which is the capital of the United

Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. London covers 614 square miles (1,590 square kilometers) in the southeastern part of England, one of the four political divisions that make up the United Kingdom. It is one of the world's leading business, financial, and cultural center, and its influence in politics, education, entertainment, media, fashion and the arts, all contribute to its status as a major global city.

Likewise, as a cultural center, London is rich in museum, art galleries, and libraries. First place is taken by the publicly owned British Museum in Bloomsbury, one of the world's greatest collections. It is renowned for its antiquities, which is drawn from all ages and civilizations and for its books, prints, drawings, maps, and coins. A large numbers of other collections provide to whole host of interest. Other famous museums in London include the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has one of the world's largest collections of decorative art. It is portrayed on the novel as the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum are mentioned on the novel that Will, Angie and her two of her

children are taking a pleasure trip. ".....They went to McDonald's. They went for the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum" (Hornby, 2000:21).

Meanwhile, the widespread movement of Londoners within the city has been accompanied by substantial changes in the character of certain districts, and this too has tended to make parts of the city more alike. After 1920, particularly, as land prices rose, many large houses in northern and western London, built in an earlier age for one middle-class family and a few servants, were divided into flats occupied by several working-class families.

Thus, knowing those facts, which are explained above, the writer, assumes that these are connected with the descriptions in the novel that most of the characters in which are considered middle-class, live in flats. For instance, Marcus and Fiona who live in a flat after moving from Cambridge. "But there was more than a whiff of the Freeman household in Fiona's flat..." (Hornby, 2000:126). Not to mention the minor character, Suzie, the only close friend of Fiona whom she meets at SPAT (Single Parents All Together). "It was true. He'd been to Suzie's flat loads of

time,..." (Hornby, 2000:178) Or even Will who actually can afford a house if he wants to but he prefers flat because it is more simple since he lives alone. ".....*What reasons could he give for not inviting Suzie round to his flat...*" (Hornby, 2000:45).

Overall, by the explanations above, it can be stated that there are some clues about the life of urban England during 1990's that are given by analyzing the setting of time and place which certainly helps the writer in leading this research to its objectives.

3.2 Extrinsic Elements

Social Realities in Urban England's Society

The widespread and rapid urbanization of the world is one of the significant trends of our time. Worldwide urban expansion brings great changes in the major patterns of social organization and culture.

In line with this, the novel that is written by Nick Hornby, *About A Boy* contains various portraits of social realities of the urban England, exactly in London in the

early nineties. These life portraits are full of social frictions with all its complexities as the great changes of social organization and culture in city life.

3.2.1 Family Dissolution through Divorce

In every society, the family remains the primary reproductive and socializing unit, and measures of family formation and dissolution continue to be important indicators of social and demographic changes.

Divorce as a family dissolution is more common than it was a generation ago. It is increasing and almost universally available to women in Europe. Divorces increased by 140% between 1981-1990, and separations increased by 120%. These figures do indicate that divorce is more popular. In particular, in Britain during the last half of a century, there has been a significant decline in the number of marriages and a considerable increase in the number of divorces. This trend has been mirrored throughout continental Europe; first in the North, but now also in the West and South. The recurring theme of fewer marriages and more divorces has also been characteristic of the United States

over the same period, although in the United State there has not been as much fluctuation in the statistics as there has been in England.

As a result, although a large proportion of divorced people remarry, there are at any one time a good number of single-person households or single-parent households created by divorce. Around 12 percent of households with children contain only one parent. Single parents are most frequently women. It is because during the twentieth century, the legal right to the children in case of divorce has changed. In the beginning of this period, the father had the right to the children. Then this right passed to the mother. Now, during the last decade, mother right is being contested. In this case, these trends are pictured on *About A Boy* by the description that most are the families in the novel are single-families, such as Marcus and Ellie who are raised by single-mothers.

"He understood what she means. The first sort of life had ended four years ago, when he was eight and his mum and dad split up..." (Hornby, 2000:3).

"What about your dad?"

"He's all right. They don't live together..." (Hornby, 2000:179).

Also, Rachel, the woman whom Will is so much in love with, is also a single mother with a son named Alistair.".....*Maybe they should meet. What's yours called?*"*"He's not mine, exactly, he thought. "Marcus," he said. "Mine's Ali. Alistair"* (Hornby, 2000:174-175).

Moreover, finally yet importantly, the portrayal is even more obvious by the following quotation that most children in Ellie and Marcus's school are raised by single mothers.

"But you aren't living with your dad, are you? How many of us are? At our school, there's about a million kids whose parents have split. And none of them are living with their dads" (Hornby, 2000:182).

Meanwhile, Nick Hornby, the author himself, is divorced from his wife. They have one child, an autistic son.

Furthermore, causes of a rising divorce-rate are varied. The most obvious initial explanation is that changes in legislation have made divorce easier. As marriage is a legal contract, divorce requires legal approval; if this approval becomes easier to obtain, then there will be more divorces. The assumption of this explanation is, of course, that there used to be many couples who wanted a divorce but could not have one because their case was not covered by any

legislation. All that legislation does is to permit these marriages to end. It is true that there have been spurts in the divorce-rate as legislation becomes more and more permissive towards divorce. However, changes in the law cannot really be the only cause of increases in the rate of divorce. One such factor is the changing role of women in society. Comparing to the condition in the eighties, the position of women has changed in a number of ways, such that a wife does not have to put up with an unsatisfactory marriage in the way that her mother might well have done. Women are not expected to be socially subservient to their husband as was often the case even 50 years ago. The financial constraints on wives are also not so serious, as an increasing proportion of married women are full-time work, which are very common for women who live in the big cities like London. Therefore, women have more independence than the women back in ten years ago and that will influence their decision as to whether or not they wish to leave a marriage. In addition, very relevant to the changing social role of women is the finding that women are, in general, less satisfied by their marriages than men are.

In sum, any relaxation of marital constraints on women

are likely to lead to a rise in the divorce-rate, whether these constraints are ones of tradition or custom or finance. Indeed, a further factor in the rise in divorce-rates is, precisely, the relaxation of traditional attitudes to divorce. Divorce is no longer so shameful and is popularly seen as a permissible solution to marital difficulties. The more common it is, the more people will know of others who have been divorced and they are correspondingly less likely to condemn this action. Contemporary attitudes to divorce which are likely to occur in city's society are illustrated by the prevailing opinions as to the effect of divorce on children. While in former years parents were encouraged to stay together for the sake of their children, more recently emphasis has been put on the damage done to the children by parents who do stay married but are in constant conflict. In these circumstances, divorce is often popularly thought to be the preferable alternative.

Even so, the impacts of divorce in family life especially to the children cannot be avoided. When parents get divorced, they and their children enter into new kinds of family arrangements. Marcus's situation on *About A Boy* is a portrait of that.

"The second sort was messier, and there were more people and places in it: his mother's boyfriends and his dad's girlfriends; flats and houses; Cambridge and London. You wouldn't believe that so much could change just because a relationship ended....." (Hornby, 2000:3).

The quotation also shows that parenthood, however, is not terminated by a divorce or a break-up and parent cooperation is the key relation in the family system. Children of divorced parents often visit either mother or father for a shorter or longer period of time while others have little or no contact with their biological father (in some rare cases, this also applies to the biological mother).

To come to the point, smaller families, higher divorce rates and more choices for women also meant smaller households, more people living alone, more single parents and more variation in what constitutes a 'family'. By the 1990s, a third of all households in London were single person households, a higher proportion than elsewhere in Britain. In addition, their children were and always be the ones who are suffered the most by the effects.

3.2.2 Drugs as Guilty Pleasures

Cannabis (Cán-na-bis) is a genus of flowering plants

that includes three putative species, *Cannabis sativa* L., *Cannabis indica* Lam., and *Cannabis ruderalis* Janisch. These three are indigenous to central Asia and surrounding regions. *Cannabis* has long been used for fiber (hemp), for medicinal purposes, and as a psychoactive. Industrial hemp products are made from *Cannabis* plants selected to produce an abundance of fiber and minimal levels of THC, one psychoactive molecule that produces the "high" associated with marijuana. The drug consists of dried flowers and leaves of plants selected to produce high levels of THC. Various extracts including hashish and hash oil are also produced. The cultivation and possession of *Cannabis* for recreational use is outlawed in most countries.

Moreover, cannabis seeds Londoners have used drugs for thousands of years, both for health and for pleasure. During the 20th century, the use and possession of drugs became increasingly controlled by the state as misuse of drugs became increasingly associated with ill health and crime.

Until the middle of the century, drug use was disapproved of but not considered a serious social problem. It was associated with bohemian behavior and foreign cultures: opium and cocaine were particularly associated with

the Chinese. Misuse of drugs emerged as a major health hazard in the 1970s when organized criminals began to take over the supply chains. Between 1980 and 1997, the number of specialist agencies dealing with drugs issues in London increased from 14 to 150.

The practice of drug addiction is particularly prevalent in large cities such as London. By the end of the 20th century, London had 12% of the United Kingdom's population but 21% of Britain's drugs users, mostly in inner London. It was estimated that there were 40,000-80,000 problem drug users in London, and drug crime was costing London as much as £1.6 billion a year.

"Oh, well that's all right then. As long as you're not smoking any, I have no objection to your father indulging his drug habit in front of you."

"Ha, ha," said Marcus. Everyone in the room looked at him, and then they continued the argument.

"I'd hardly describe the occasional spliff as a drug habit, would you?" (Hornby, 2000:165).

"Will had been trying not to think about Christmas, but as got it nearer he was beginning to go off the idea of watching a few hundred videos and smoking a few thousand joints" (Hornby, 2000:156).

However, according to the quotation above it can be seen that the portrayal of drugs using in the novel is not as

extreme as the facts. Clive and Will cannot be considered as drugs addicts because they still can control themselves and just doing it occasionally. It is more like guilty pleasures for them. Or for Will, also because it is trendy since everyone does it. *".....He had taken Ecstasy (five points), but in a club and not merely at home as a sociological exercise"* (Hornby, 2000:5).

In brief, for Clive and Will, drugs are another satisfaction. However, it does not mean that they are addicted to it. They just do it for fun and following the trends.

3.2.3 Depression and Inclination of Suicide

Suicide, at least in the western world, is popularly thought to reflect the stress of urban living. Certainly, for decades the urban rate was higher than the rural, though in recent times there is some evidence of a rehearsal. Suicide rates differ considerably according to such sociological variables as age, sex, race, marital status, social class and religion.

Older people have a higher incidence of suicide than younger. Although people over 45 years make up only one-fifth of the population, 60 percent of the suicides come from this group. For those 65 years or more, the rate is three times as high as for those under 45. Taking one's life in later years may be the result of weariness, ill health, and disillusionment. When an adolescent or a lovesick young man destroy himself, it often gets great public attention, but actually the rate for young people is very low.

Furthermore, among people twenty years and over, the rate for married persons is much lower than for either the single, widowed, or divorced. Further evidence of the protective function of the family, is shown by the fact that the suicide rate among childless couples is higher than among those who have children.

Nevertheless, Fiona and Kurt Cobain's case (the real person, a very popular artist at that time who is depicted on the novel who died because of suicide on March 18, 1994) are somewhat different. Both of them have children. Fiona, even she has separated from her husband for four years, she still owns her only son, Marcus. The writer assumes that her

motivation to take her own life is all began with the depression that she has been suffered ever since she has moved to London. As it stated on *Sociology & Social Life* by Raymond W. Mack and Kimbal Young, a sense of blockage, stress, and tension arising from the frustration of some motive, drive, or wish may lead to an outlet thorough aggression. The most severe of this form for example, is suicide. What's more, the writer's assumption on what has caused her to suffer the depression, one of the factor is that she feels lonely and isolated. It is related to the the fact that it has often been said persons may feel more lonely in large cities than anywhere else. There is a vast difference between the incidental and temporary contiguity in urban mass society and the shared experience and interstimulation of members of a small community and its neighborhoods. The other reason is that the social situation as a single-parents is one of stress. She has to work on the financial matters all by herself and has to cope with young and demanding children on their own.

".....'He just seems so much older,' Fiona said one afternoon, after Will had dropped him off, and he had disappeared into his bedroom with a cursory thank you and a brusque hello to his mother.'Where did we go

wrong, eh? Will asked plaintively. We've given that boy everything, and this is how he repays us.' 'I feel as though I'm losing him,' said Fiona. Will still hadn't got the hang of joking with her. What left his mouth with the weight and substance of froth on a cappuccino seemed to enter her ear like suet pudding. 'It's all Smashing Pumpkins and Ellie and Zoe and.....I think he's been smoking.' Will laughed. 'It's not funny.' 'It is, kind of. How much would you have given for Marcus to be caught smoking with his mates a few months ago?' 'Nothing. I abhor smoking.' 'Yes, but.....' He gave up. Fiona was determined not to see the point he was trying to make. 'Does it bother you that you're losing him?' 'Why do you ask that? Of course it bothers me.' 'It's just that you've seemed.....I don't want to be crude about it, but you've seemed better recently.' 'I think I am. I don't know what it is, but I just feel less worn down by everything.' 'That's great.' 'I think I'm just on top of things more. I don't know why.'" (Hornby, 2000:277).

Even though, efforts to understand motivation meet with obstacles. For one thing, it is difficult to get valid first-hand information: suicide notes are not much help. For another, survivors' explanations may be inaccurate and therefore useless. However, the cause assigned by the survivors may be useful clue to what is considered worth living or dying for. That is, provides us insight into the values and norms of a given group or society.

3.2.4 Popular Culture's Obsession Especially Among Youngsters

The term 'culture' is defined very broadly in sociology. It is most commonly used to delineate the symbolic aspects of human society to include beliefs, rituals, conventions, ideals or artistic endeavors. In this usage, culture contrasts with the biological aspects of human behavior, on the one hand, and society or social institutions, on the other.

Television, radio, music and sport have become inseparable parts of the society's rituals in daily life as variety of leisures.

a. Television

In England, some twenty million TV licenses are issued every year and viewers spend an average of twenty hours per week watching broadcast television. People might often find themselves more engaged, more entertained, and even more emotionally touched by what they watch on television than by their own experiences in real life.

Some critics even suggest that people regard what they see on television as more real than what goes on around them and thus virtually narrow their world to what comes to them on "the tube." Paradoxically, television's greatest benefit is its potential to broaden the experience, to bring the audience to places they could never visit, to people they never meet, and to a range of ideas otherwise unavailable to people.

Thus, television watching becomes the central family leisure activity. This is reflected on *About A Boy* that most characters are taken their leisure at home, watching television. Especially Will that has opportunities for leisure which have been created by the greater availability of free time. It gets more serious when the TV-induced occurs phobia, an irrational fear of being away from the tube that has led to a significant loss in human contact.

Moreover, in fact, the 1990s was an important decade in the history of television. Many programs that defined the decade are still popular even years after the last episodes were aired. One of the most popular one is *The Simpsons*. Matt Groening's well-known cartoon has been a fixture of

television programming since 1989, and the characters, Homer, Marge, Bart, and Lisa have become recognizable popular culture icons. This is reflected on the novel as Rachel's son, Ali is so into it. *"And is Marcus into skateboards and rap and The Simpsons and so on?" Will raised his eyes skywards and chuckled fondly...*(Hornby, 2000:175).

On the other hand, besides watching television station programs, television can be functioned to play video games. Video games become more advanced and popular. Rivals Nintendo and Sega dominate the early 1990s. The Sony PlayStation and Nintendo 64 would later dominate the late 1990s and remain popular beyond 1999. Sega's Dreamcast (1999) marked the end of Sega's role in the console market. One of the most popular games at that time is Super Mario Bros. *".....and the Super Mario stickers.....A social historian of the future would probably be able to date the room to within a twenty-four hour period"* (Hornby, 2000:195).

b. Music

The musical era of the 1990s was one filled with a variety of pop, rap, and alternative music artists as well as

a plethora of one-hit wonders. It was a time when musical taste was as varied as the events that were happening at the time. Many of the most popular acts that emerged in the 1990s were bands and artists who enjoyed a type of resurgence in the mainstream music scene after their popularity had dwindled for a decade or so. Other artists were just starting out during this decade and made a huge impact on the musical scene. Following is an explanation of some of the most memorable artists that helped to define the era in terms of musical differentiations as well as some artists who are best forgotten.

The early years of the 1990s began with a surge in popularity for music genres like techno (often called dance or house music) and hip-hop that continued throughout the decade. Groups like Technotronic entered the Billboard charts with big hits like "Pump Up the Jam" and "Get Up (Before the Night is Over)". Others will undoubtedly remember the hits from C+C Music Factory, including "Gonna Make You Sweat (Everybody Dance Now)" that is still a popular dance song at many of the dance clubs across the country. Similarly, the hip-hop music scene achieved popularity with artists like MC

Hammer, Tone Loc, Vanilla Ice and Snoop Doggy Dogg. "*(Right now he was listening to Nirvana and Snoop Doggy Dogg, and you couldn't have found too much that sounded like them in 1933)*" (Hornby, 2000:6).

Around late 1992 to early 1993, there was a change starting in the mainstream radio playlists. While the sexual lyrics of techno and hip-hop still dominated the airwaves, a new style of rock music was making an impact. Bands like Pearl Jam and Soundgarden were offering youngsters a new type of rock music to listen to that contained catchy lyrics about the angst and trials of teenage years. These songs also seemed to send a message about the status quo of society and the helplessness that was felt among the teens and early adults of the era. Songs like Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" spoke about a teen revolution in a seemingly meaningless world. The song also marked the beginning of the grunge and alternative rock phase that remained popular throughout the mid-1990s. No wonder, Nirvana was considered one of the most phenomenal bands in the era of nineties. This is reflected on the characters of Will, Ellie and Marcus. Not to mention Will and Ellie who are music freaks. Especially

Ellie that she even becomes some kind of obsessed with the vocalist, Kurt Cobain that she keeps on wearing her sweatshirt that shows Cobain's picture in the front despite that it will make her getting problems with the headmistress.

"Well, they must think I've done something wrong, or I wouldn't be sitting here, would I?"

"No."

"It's this sweatshirt. They don't want me to wear it, and I'm not going to take it off. So there's going to be a row."

He looked at it. They were all supposed to wear sweatshirt with the school logo on them, but Ellie showed a bloke with scraggy hair and half a beard. He had big eyes and looked a little bit like Jesus, except more modern and with bleached hair" (Hornby, 2000:137).

"I loved him." "You didn't know him." "Of course I knew him. I listened to him sing every single day. I wear him every single day. The things he sings about, that's him. I know him better than I know you. He understands me" (Hornby, 2000:248).

It even gets worse when she sees a big cardboard cut-out of Kurt Cobain in the window of a record shop on the day of his death. She gets angry because she thinks that the owner has already trying to make money out of him already. She threw of her boots and threw it away the window glass.

"Look at that," said Ellie. "Bastards. They're trying to make money out of him already."

She took off one of her boots, and threw it at the glass as harsh as she could" (Hornby, 2000:250).

Overall, the music in the 1990s went through a series of changes in regards to the mainstream radio airwaves. Ironically, it was nearly a full-circle of styles and tastes that resulted in recreating the mainstream sound that is strongly reminiscent of popular music in the 1980s. Many of these bands and artists had staying power, though. Nearly a decade later, we are still being exposed to many of their antics or effects that they had on the musical front. Fortunately, several of these acts have matured in recent years and continue to produce quality music while others with less talent have fallen by the wayside in recent years.

c. Sports

Britain is known to be the first country to organize sport as national activity. In the second half of the nineteenth century it organized and exported a number of games, notably football, rugby football, hockey, lawn tennis, golf and cricket. The initial purpose behind organized sports was to provide an outlet for youthful energies at public schools. It was generally believed to have character - building qualities for future leaders. However, it was not long before local businessmen began to organize football and other sports

as recreational activity for their workforces. Football clubs quickly sprang up in towns and cities all over Britain, and football was rapidly taken into working-class culture. The Saturday afternoon match was an occasion which working-class men would attend, supporting their local team.

Yet, the impacts of sports popularity, mainly football which is become the most popular sport in England until these days is reflected on the novel through Will's character that knows every football player's names in Manchester United, one of the most popular football club at the time.

"No. There's nobody who plays for Man United with bleached hair and a beard who looks like Jesus."

"Tell me some of their names."

"Hughes? Cantona? Giggs? Sharpe? Robson?" (Hornby, 2000:144).

Even, in fashion, particularly in shoes, sports do influence the society in forming their style. Such trainer-brand like Adidas becomes one of the most footwear likely to use. Especially in teenagers, wearing Adidas new trainers, you will be considered cool in school. *"What do you fancy?" "I don't know." "It's got to be Adidas, I think." "Why?" "Because that's what everyone wears"* (Hornby, 2000:111).

In summary, even if popular culture is merely low-quality amusement or a means of escaping the demands of the "real" world, it delivers important messages that people may internalize and later act on, for better or for worse. And that the impacts such as television-induced phobia and obsession toward certain music artist like what happens to Ellie, dominantly occurs in the teenagers partly because they have spent less time working and, consequently, they have more time to themselves and more time for leisures.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the previous chapters, it can be concluded as follows:

1. The novel, *About A Boy* by Nick Hornby depicts the social realities of urban society in London, England at the era of early nineties through its characters and settings such as the parental-breakups, drugs consumption, depression and suicide tendency and popular cultures strong influences mostly toward young generations.
2. The problems, which are described by the author, represent the picture of urban England society's life during the nineties. Those problems are frequently happened amid all of societies.
3. London was at the heart of all debates about migration and citizenship in the 20th century made London was bound to be at the centre of change..

Modernization as the product of social and cultural changes have occurred some alterations in society's condition, ideology and behavior pattern.

In addition, by all the social problems that are occurred on the novel, it all comes to one term is that we all need somebody in our lives.

4.2 Suggestion

To analyze the literary work, which is compared with the fact in the society, the writer has to figure out the similarity between the story and the condition of society. Therefore, the basic theory, and the reliable sources are very important in developing this thesis.

However, the writer does realize that it is still far from perfection. Hence, the writer d.

oes hope that the next students would like to fill the lack of this writing and any other aspects that this writing does not cope with the order to provide the advantages for the progress of knowledge in the future.

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APPENDIX

▪ Synopsis

The novel is about two boys, Will, a 36-year-old bachelor, and Marcus, an eccentric, introverted, bullied 12-year-old with a suicidal mother. Will, who never had to work thanks to the royalties from his father's Christmas song hit, has a lot of spare time. Most of this he spends smoking, watching TV, listening to albums and looking for female companionship, preferably of the short-lived variety. After a pleasant relationship with a single mother, Will comes up with the idea of attending a single parents group as a new way to pick up women. He invents a two-year old son called Ned.

It is at one of these single parents meetings he comes to know Marcus and a friendship develops. Will helps Marcus to fit into the modern world. He takes him shopping, buys him shoes and introduces him to the music of Nirvana. As the story progresses Marcus and Will make more friendships. Ellie, a very tough fifteen-year-old girl, who is constantly in trouble at school because she insists on wearing a Kurt Cobain T-shirt, adopts Marcus. He also spends some time with his dad who visits Marcus and his mother for

Christmas, together with his new girlfriend and her mother. Meanwhile Will starts going out with a single mum called Rachel, who has a son called Ali, who is about the same age as Marcus. In the end, Marcus evolves and becomes a “normal” kid for his age. Will in the end is more mature, he wants to marry Rachel. So, both of them have started to live according to their age.

▪ **The Biography of Nick Hornby**

Nick Hornby who was nicknamed by journalists as “the maestro of the male confessional” that he gained popularity through the troubled male protagonists of his first three novels, *High Fidelity* (1995), *Fever Pitch* (1997) and *About a Boy* (1998), was born in Maidenhead, England in 1957. He is the son of a businessman, Sir Derek Hornby. When the younger Hornby was 11 years old, his parents divorced. Even if, he had always been visited by his father. During the visits, his father began taking him to watch the North London Premier League club Arsenal. He then ultimately developed into a loyal, and somewhat irrational, fan of the team. Hornby also became a dedicated reader, absorbing everything from many kinds of books that he read. As an English Literature major at Cambridge University, he began composing stage plays, screenplays, and radio plays in his spare time. A professor then introduced Hornby to a novelist, which inspired him to write prose.

After graduating, Hornby worked a series of jobs. He taught grade school, gave language classes, and before becoming a paid journalist, he served as a host for Samsung executives visiting the U.K. Moreover, he composed a pop culture column for the Independent, and wrote about books and sports for publications like Esquire and the Sunday Times. In 1992, he published his first book, *Contemporary American Fiction*, a collection of essays on American writers such as Ann Beattie, Raymond Carver, and Tobias Wolff. In the same year, he released *Fever Pitch*, his memoir about being a devoted (and irrational) Arsenal fan since childhood. The work was became a surprise hit, earning countless acclaim and selling out copies.

Three years after, Hornby finished his first novel, *High Fidelity*. Then, in 1997, following its success, *Fever Pitch*, his first novel, was made into the screen adaptation in which he made a cameo appearance. At the next year, Hornby published *About a Boy*, a novel which was inspired in part by the children (especially the badly behaved adolescent girls) that he encountered as a teacher. The story follows Will, an immature single man, and Marcus, a struggling preadolescent, as they grow up together. *About a Boy*, which was considered as his most favorably reviewed book, helped him in earning the E.M. Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1999. The same with *Fever Pitch*, *About a Boy* also went into movie

production under the direction of brothers Chris and Paul Weitz with Hugh Grant and Nicholas Hoult in the lead roles and Hornby as an executive producer. Released in 2002, critics hailed *About a Boy* as the best Hornby adaptation to date.

While enjoying his big-screen success, Hornby published *How to Be Good*, which earned him Britain's prestigious W.H. Smith Fiction Award in 2002. He also began working on several screenplays, including collaboration with Academy Award-winning writer, Emma Thompson. He continues to contribute to Time Out, the Sunday Times, the Times Literary Supplement, and is the pop music reviewer for the New Yorker. The parents of an autistic son, Hornby and his ex-wife founded *TreeHouse*, a school for autistic children in London. In 2000, he edited a collection of short stories entitled *Speaking with the Angel* to raise funds for the school.